

**Report for the
Horticultural Development Council**

**Investigation into the Response of Consumers to the
Concept of Locally Sourced Plants.**

Project Code: HNS 160

**Report on the Outcomes,
Findings and Conclusions.**

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The results and conclusions in this report are based on an investigation conducted over a 5 month period. The conditions under which the research was carried out and the results obtained have been reported in detail and with accuracy. However as with any surveys using sampling techniques the results are subject to statistical parameters of significance and it must be borne in mind that different circumstances

and conditions could produce different results. Therefore, care must be taken with interpretation of the results, especially if they are used as the basis for commercial recommendations.

AUTHENTICATION

We declare that this work was done under our supervision according to the procedures described herein and that the report represents a true and accurate record of the results obtained.

Mr. Stephen Sands
Director
Impetus Marketing

Signature Date 30th September 2007

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Growers Summary

Headline

The use of the Home Grown label on ornamental plants resulted in an overall increase in plant sales compared to non-labelled plants.

Background and expected deliverables

A previous market research study with gardeners, (TNS Research Report, July 2006) concluded that although most gardeners do not currently consider the origins of the plants they purchase a great many wanted more information and the majority stated a preference for buying locally grown plants if given the choice. Consumer awareness of these issues has been raised by the marketing campaigns from food producers who have had great success in promoting the concept of “locally grown” and its benefits. Central to this have been the messages about reduced food miles and giving support to the local business community.

There has been no initiative for plants on this level although a small and increasing number of growers have developed and are using symbols on their plants indicating that they are grown locally. Information regarding the benefits of locally sourced plants is however lacking at the point of sale and there has been little in the way of a marketing campaign to create awareness with gardeners of the issues and benefits.

Given the positive findings of this previous research it was decided to test the consumer response to the concept of locally grown ornamental plants and its influence on purchasing intentions and the effect on home grown sales.

The project objectives were to assess:

- Consumer reaction to the Home Grown concept and levels of interest.
- Response to the Home Grown symbol itself and to the marketing messages.
- Reactions to the marketing material and its effectiveness in communicating the benefits of the Home Grown concept

- Effect on future purchasing intention
- Feedback to identify any modification required to the symbol, the communication messages and the design of the marketing material.

Summary of the project and main conclusions

To achieve the objectives a number of activities were initiated.

A “Home Grown” marketing identity was developed. A symbol was designed for use on plant labels and marketing material. A consumer leaflet was prepared for use along with a point of sale board.

Four garden centres and their suppliers were recruited to take part in the test with each being supplied with leaflets and boards. Displays of Home Grown labelled plants were created and the same plants display alongside without the identity.

Interviews were carried out with shoppers in the vicinity of the displays and sales were monitored at the four test sites. PR coverage was sought in the trade press to create awareness with growers and the retail trade of the project and its aims.

Operational Details

Ornamentals were used in three of the locations and herbs in the fourth. The individual plant pots or trays bore a stick-on-label depicting the Home Grown symbol with a Home Grown poster placed behind the displays.

On two of the sites the consumer leaflets were placed alongside the plants. Where this was not practical in the other two, the leaflets were placed in a holder and displayed at the checkouts and enquiry desk. Displays of the same plants but without the “Home Grown” label were positioned near to the Home Grown display. Both sections were of the same size and quality of position.

The display at the Newbridge garden centre is depicted in Figure 1 (overleaf).



Figure 1. Display at Newbridge Garden Centre.

Results

The results of the project have been divided into two sections. The first section summarises the results of the consumer research undertaken with gardeners. The second section details the effect that labelling plants “Home Grown” had on sales.

Section 1 - Consumer Research Results

The results of the research undertaken with gardeners are detailed below. These have been summarised under 6 headings. A total of 56 interviews were undertaken across the 4 garden centres.

1. Factors Considered in Plant Purchasing

The main considerations for gardeners when choosing a plant appear to be:

- suitability of the plant for their garden
- the health of the plant.
- the lack of diseases and pests
- the price

Prior to being introduced to the Home Grown concept few respondents had considered the origin of plants and were unaware that many are imported from overseas. These findings are consistent with the TNS Research previously undertaken with gardeners for this project.

2. The Home Grown Symbol

The design of the Home Grown symbol was liked by nearly all respondents and interpreted by most as locally grown.

The symbol and associated wording spontaneously conveyed many of the positive attributes that we wished to be associated with British/locally grown plants including:

- Better for the environment
- Support for local (British) growers
- Plants would be better adapted to the local conditions

A very small number interpreted Home Grown to mean grown on the premises where the plant was sold and several respondents thought the plants would be grown by local cooperatives. It was demonstrated that this misunderstanding could easily be overcome by the inclusion of a descriptor

on the plant label with the region where the plant is cultivated e.g. Home Grown in Surrey, Home Grown in East Anglia.

3. Response to Communicating the Source of Origin

Prior to being introduced to the “Home Grown” concept few respondents had considered the origin of the plants and were unaware that many are imported from overseas. These findings are consistent with the results from the TNS Research.

When presented with the benefits of locally grown plants the interest among most respondents was very high. Almost without exception they responded very positively to the Home Grown marketing messages and this was borne out by the high numbers saying they would purchase “Home Grown” in the future.

The provision of information on the origin of the plants raised interest in the subject with respondents and a number of respondents were so enthused that they requested more information on the subject.

4. Key Marketing Messages

The key benefits consumers associated with Home Grown Plants were:

- Better for the environment
- Supports local growers and the local economy
- Reduced incidence of pests and diseases
- Better/healthier plants

It is clear from their comments that many are environmentally aware and already support and understand the benefits of local produce from the food industry.

5. The Marketing Material

The consumer leaflet effectively conveyed the key benefits of Home grown plants.

The overall design was liked, thought to be eye catching and was described as “very professional”.

Respondents were not asked specifically about the poster but the few who made reference to it liked the way it conveyed the main benefits and commented that it was easily seen and stood out among the other promotional material.

6. Influence on Purchasing Intentions

Once the benefits of Home Grown plants were known this had a significant and positive influence on future purchasing intention:

91% said they would be more likely to buy the plant bearing the “Home Grown” symbol. The remaining 9% said it would have no effect on their decision. No one said it would make them less likely to purchase.

Section 2 - Sales Results

Despite being asked to do so, one of the outlets failed to record the sales of the plants which were not labelled Home Grown. This made any comparison of sales levels impossible. Of the three outlets who recorded the sales levels two reported higher sales for the Home Grown plants. The percentage differences in favour of the Home Grown labelled plants were:

The Farm Shop	+ 16%
Newbridge	+ 13%

The third site Rushfields, recorded higher sales for the non labelled plants. However sales were very low at just 28 pots for non labelled and 22 pots of Home Grown. There is also a suggestion that the position of the two displays may have influenced this result as the non labelled plants were first in line of the flow of traffic. Some other evidence exists that suggests that other factors apart from consumer preference alone influenced this result and the results at The Farm Shop and Newbridge are a fairer reflection of the

consumer response to the concept. See science section for supporting evidence

Given that there was no prior consumer publicity and therefore consumers had no awareness of the Home Grown concept before visiting the garden centres the sales results are very encouraging and support the research findings that creating awareness of “Home Grown” and the associated benefits will result in gardeners buying more of the plants which bear the symbol.

Trade and Growers Response

The comments from the growers and retailers taking part in the trial were very positive. All wanted to continue to promote Home Grown after the trial ended. Several asked how they could acquire more leaflets and labels. Requests have also been received from several growers/retailers who have seen the publicity and wanted to know how they could participate.

Financial benefits

Increasing the sales of ‘Home Grown’ plants at retail outlets will increase volumes of UK plant sales for UK growers.

Action points for growers

- The consumer is receptive to information on the origin of ornamental plants and promoting Home Grown will enable them to make an informed choice. This in turn will benefit those growers promoting Home Grown.
- Growers should use the “Home Grown” symbol. The impact and the benefits will be greater if growers collectively use the “Home Grown” symbol on labels and marketing material. Growers developing their own symbol will only serve to confuse the customer. Growers will benefit from the greater impact and cost effectiveness of marketing offered by a national symbol and consistent marketing messages.

- This initiative provides an opportunity for growers to raise profile in their community by using it to obtain PR coverage. Use the customer benefits which the research has identified as the basis for an article.
- Get the retailer to organise a “British Grown” area to maximise the impact and create consumer awareness.
- Jointly organise a buy “British” promotion with retailers.

Science Section

Introduction

The objective of this project was to assess the consumer reaction to the concept of locally produced plants in the purchasing situation by undertaking interviews with gardeners and measuring sales. Gardeners were exposed to plants labelled with the Home Grown symbol and were able to view the marketing messages via the point of sale material and the consumer leaflet. Sales of Home Grown plants were also measured.

Materials

The marketing concept for locally grown plants was developed. Several options were considered, British Grown, Locally Grown and Home Grown. Home Grown was chosen because it did not appear to suffer from the important disadvantages associated with the other two, namely:

British Grown

The TNS research indicated that some gardeners reacted negatively to this wording feeling it was too nationalistic. In addition some respondents could not associate with it personally because it was so general a term and did not communicate whether the plants were in fact grown in an area near to them.

Locally Grown

The project team felt that this term suffered from the difficulty in applying the term universally to all British grown plants and also in determining when a plant was locally grown. For example it was felt that plants supplied by a grower in East Anglia to a retailer in Hampshire could not be labelled “locally grown” but could be applied to the same plants supplied to a retailer in Norfolk.

It was also noted that this issue of source of origin had been raised in the consumer press with regard to food products labelled “locally grown”. This has called into question the validity of the locally grown description.

Home Grown was therefore selected and questions included in the consumer research to test the meaning of this wording to the consumer.

A Home Grown identity, marketing messages and marketing material was produced:

1. A “Home Grown” marketing identity was developed.
2. A symbol was designed and applied to plant labels and marketing material.
3. A consumer leaflet and POS board were designed and printed.
4. A consumer questionnaire was developed.
5. A trade press article was written and sent to the press, with H.D.C clearance.

Methodology

Retailer Logistics

Four retailers were recruited to take part in the trial in the period from 1st July to 24 August 2007. The trial lasted for one week in two locations, Secretts and The Farm Shop and for two weeks at Newbridge and Rushfields. The decision was taken to extend the trial to two weeks because of the relatively low level of sales. This was due to the very low visitor numbers to the garden centres largely as a result of the very bad weather throughout July and into early August. July was the wettest on record and many areas in the South East suffered extensive flooding.

The four retailers who took part in the trial were:

Retailer	Plant Supplier
Rushfields Garden Centre Poynings, nr. Brighton, Sussex	Prenplants
Newbridge Garden Centre Horsham, Sussex	Newbridge
The Farm Shop Lyne, Chertsey	Plant Avera
Secretts Garden Centre Godalming, Surrey	Pepperpot

Two displays were created in each garden centre. These two displays were equally matched for the types, quantity and quality of plants. The only differences being that one display consisted of plants bearing a label with the Home Grown symbol. This display was supported with the point of sale material and consumer leaflets. The plants in the second display were identical except for the exclusion of this label. The displays were sited as near as was practical to each other to minimise the effect that position might have on sales.

Stephen Sands of Impetus Marketing visited each site on the first day of the trials to ensure that these standards were applied. Following completion of the trials the displays were taken down.

The plants used in the tests were:

Rushfields	Dianthus and Nemesia
Newbridge	Pansy and Dianthus
The Farm Shop	Penstemen, Lychnis, Coreopsis, Dahlias, Juncus, Marigold
Secretts	A range of herbs

RESULTS

Introduction

1. Consumer Research

This project was developed on the basis of the consumer research being the primary measurement of the consumer reaction to the Home Grown concept in the context of their shopping experience. A target of 50 interviews was set across the participating garden centres in order to draw meaningful conclusions from the results.

A total of 56 interviews were actually completed over a 4 week period between 5th July and 12 August. The research was undertaken at all 4 participating garden centres in Surrey and Sussex. Gardeners were selected at random and interviews undertaken near the section featuring the “Home Grown” display. No quotas were set for the profile of gardeners but an attempt was made to get a spread of ages although the profile of gardeners meant this was biased to the 35+ age groups.

An experienced interviewer was employed using a questionnaire with a combination of open ended and preset questions. The interviews lasted for between 10 and 15 minutes depending on the respondents’ interest in the subject and the length of their answers to the open ended questions.

The detailed responses and the questionnaire can be seen in the appendix.

2. Press Coverage

A trade press article was written and following approval by HDC was circulated to the press by Impetus Marketing. The purpose was to inform growers and retailers of the Home Grown trial and to communicate the key aspects of the trial.

3. Timing

The intention was to carry out the test in the garden centres during the peak sales season of May and June 2007 and an application for funding was duly prepared in February. Due to the time required to put everything in place

including getting the cooperation of the suppliers and retailers it was not feasible to commence the trail before the beginning of July 2007.

	Test Period	Customer Research
Secretts:	3 July - 10 July	Thursday 5 July
Rushfields	6 July -13 July	Saturday 7 July
The Farm Shop	26 July -2 nd August	Sunday 29 July
Newbridge	10 th August -24 August	Saturday 11 August

Detailed Results

The results of the project have been divided into two sections. The first section summarises the results of the consumer research undertaken with gardeners. The second section details the effect that labelling plants "Home Grown" had on sales.

Section 1 - Consumer Research Results

The results of the research undertaken with gardeners are detailed below.

1. Frequency of Shopping Trips for Garden Plants

The majority of respondents in our survey went on frequent shopping trips and so appear to be enthusiastic gardeners. 61% went on 6 or more trips a year, a further 32% between 2-5 times a year and just 7% less than twice a year.

2. Factors Considered When Making a Selection.

Consumers were asked without prompting what factors they considered when making a plant selection. The key factors can be categorised as suitability for the required purpose, the health of the plant, and price. The first two requirements are expressed in a number of ways.

Suitability

Suitable for the soil/light conditions

Size of the plant

Acclimatised to the local conditions

Plant Health

Healthy appearance

Looks fresh

Free from pests and diseases

Price

51% of respondents spontaneously mentioning price as a factor in their purchasing decision. This did however vary significantly according to the type of outlet, with shoppers at the farm shop significantly more price sensitive than those at the 3 garden centres.

Plant Origin

The origin of the plant was not a key consideration. Only 6 respondents at this stage said they took this into account with just 2 specifically considering whether it was grown locally. These findings are consistent with the TNS research undertaken with gardeners.

3. Recognition of the Home Grown Symbol.

The only opportunity that respondents had of seeing the symbol was at the garden centres on the day or a day or two before the interviewing took place. As expected therefore few claimed to have seen the Home Grown symbol. Nine respondents said they had seen the symbol but when shown the symbol itself these respondents failed to recognise it. This may be a case of mistaken identity having seen some other symbol on plants, or on other items e.g. food or even just an expectation that some plants would be labelled as being grown in Britain.

4. First Impressions of the Home Grown Symbol

Respondents were shown a card featuring the symbol and asked for their impressions

The overall reaction was very positive. It was felt to be eye catching, to stand out and liked for the simplicity of the design. A number also felt the colours were very patriotic and associated them with Britishness. In developing the symbol the “flower” design was chosen in preference to those featuring the Union Jack itself as there was an indication from the previous research that some felt this was too nationalistic. It appears that the intention to suggest Britishness by the use of colours has worked for a number of people without the potential negative associations of the Union Jack itself.

A very small number, 6 respondents out of 56 criticised the design.

The table below provides the detailed comments.

First Impressions of the Home Grown Symbol

	Number of
--	-----------

	respondents
Base	65 respondents
Eye catching design	9
It really stands out	15
Caught my attention	3
Sub total – impactful/stands out	27
Like the simplicity of the design	13
Colours - very patriotic/ British	8
Professional	6
Nice design / design looks great	6
Pretty	5
Like the flower design	4
Negative comments	
Don't like the plant	4
Boring	1
A bit basic	1

Explanation of the figures

The total number of responses in the chart above and the other “open-ended” questions that follow may in some instances add up to more than the total number of respondents interviewed. This is because respondents were free to give more than one answer. However where a person made the comment in two different ways but with a similar meaning this has only been counted once and not twice. For example in the above table 27 different people remarked that the Home Grown symbol was impactful/stands out although they expressed it in slightly different ways. If a respondent had said “Eye catching design” and “It really stands out” they would have only been counted once in the total of 27.

5. Benefits Associated with the Home Grown Symbol

Having seen the symbol respondents were asked what benefits they would associate with plants bearing it. 19 made comments about the origin of the plants, with the majority of these stating that they would be grown locally. Many said that the plants would have been grown locally. 3 respondents took the expression “Home Grown” to indicate that the plants were grown on the premises i.e. the garden centre/farm shop or by a local cooperative.

However when shown a plant with the sticker bearing the words “Home Grown in Surrey” it was realised that this would not necessarily be the case. Other more specific benefits were mentioned which can be attributed from their association with the words “Home Grown”. It is revealing that 17 respondents, over 30% instantly felt they would be of a better quality. Eight respondents thought the price would be lower. This is likely to be because of the perceived savings on transport costs which was mentioned by 7 of them.

	No. of Respondents
Grown locally	13
Grown in the UK	2
Grown by local cooperatives	2
Grown on the premises	1
Better quality plants	17
Healthier	1
Acclimatised to the soil	5
Acclimatised to local conds/climate	5
Save on transport costs	1
Not transported so far	6
Environmentally better	5
Environmentally friendly	1
Less pests (foreign)	4
Lower price	8

6. Messages Conveyed by the Consumer Leaflet

Respondents were given a short while to read the leaflet prior to being asked what messages it conveyed to them. The leaflet worked very well in conveying the key messages that is Home Grown plants are:

- Better for the environment
- Support local growers and the local economy
- Reduce the incidence of pests and diseases
- Better/healthier plants.

Only one respondent was not impressed with the message conveyed commenting that it was all “environmental mumbo jumbo”.

	No. of respondents
Home Grown is better environmentally	18
Environmentally friendly	7
Less traffic/CO ₂ emissions, better for the environment	34
Reducing the carbon print	3
Less plant miles	2
Supports the local economy / businesses	33
Better plants /better quality	30
Less pests / better pest control	23
Healthy plants	3

7. Importance of These Messages

The respondents were asked whether these were important to them. Most felt they were. The most important of these to the respondents are:

1. Better for the environment/environmentally friendly. Some specifically related this to the potential for reduction in traffic and CO₂ emissions.
2. Supports the local economy
3. Better pest control / reduction in pests and diseases
4. Better, healthier plants

The marketing messages have raised awareness of the issues and found a very favourable reaction as some of these comments testify:

“I buy locally produced food, now I will with my plants”,

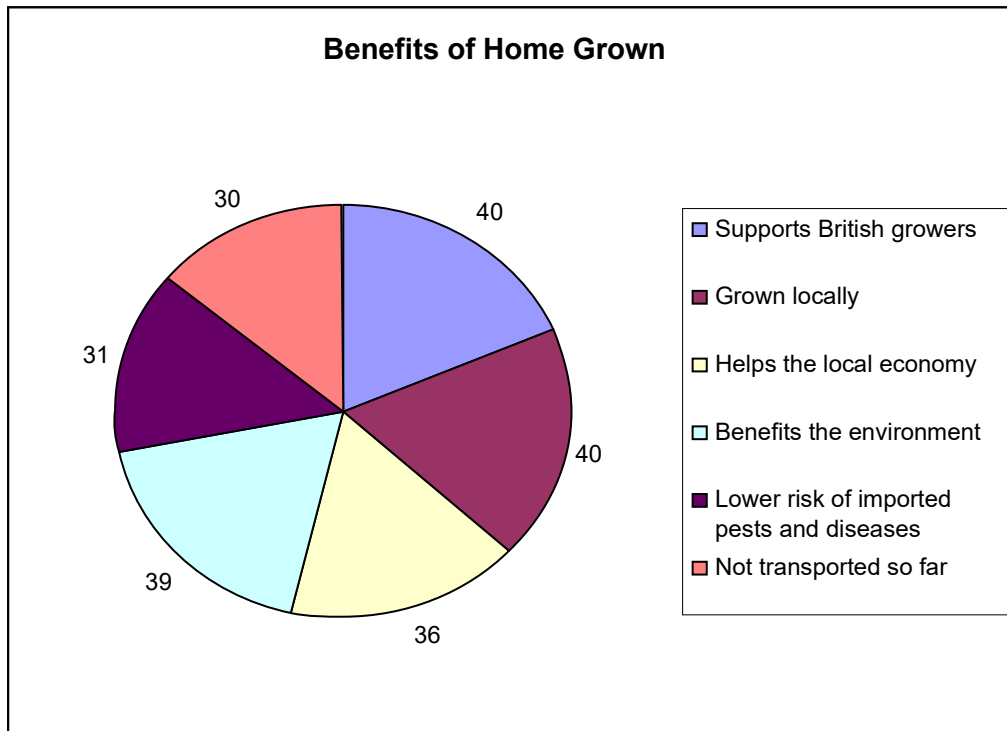
“Very in favour of this, I’ll keep an eye out for the sign”

“Very important messages, carbon print, supporting the local economy”

“Great that you are raising awareness”

8. Prompted Response

As a final measure of the importance attached to the various benefits of locally grown plants respondents were presented with a list of these benefits and asked which ones would influence their choice. All of these scored highly and are valuable messages to support the concept and benefits of Home Grown plants. For example 40 of the 56 respondents said that supporting British Growers would influence their purchase decision.



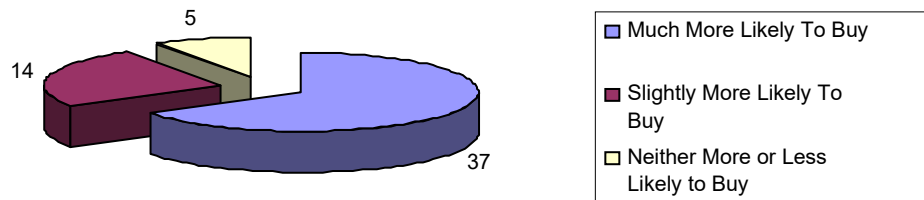
This finding supports the benefits spontaneously identified by the gardeners themselves and confirms the messages developed for the promotion of Home Grown plants are all relevant to gardeners.

9. Influence on Purchasing Intention

The effect of communicating the benefits of Home Grown plants is clearly demonstrated by the impact it has on future purchasing intentions. Fifty one respondents, that is 91% said they would be more likely to buy the plant with the Home Grown label than an identical plant without the symbol at the same price. Of these respondents those saying “much more likely to buy” outnumber those saying “slightly more likely to buy” by almost 3 to 1.

No one said they would be less likely to purchase the Home Grown plant.

Likelihood of Choosing Home Grown



The numbers refer to individual respondents

Section 2 - SALES RESULTS

The primary tool in this project to assess the response of consumers to the concept of locally sourced plants was the consumer research. The test with garden centres was arranged primarily to facilitate the research in the setting of the purchase situation with labelled plants. This did however also enable us to measure the uptake of the plants. It was not anticipated that the difference in sales between Home Grown plants and non-home grown plants would be high because there was little consumer publicity. Consumers would therefore not be aware of the symbol and the benefits associated with it prior to entering the garden centre. The only exposure to these was for a short period in one area of the garden centre itself by way of the labelling and the display board and leaflet.

The results should also be viewed in the context of the limitations arising from the small number of participating garden centres and the limited time period over which each test took part. It is also unfortunate that the period of the test was accompanied by particularly bad weather which reduced the number of shoppers. Three garden centres provided the information requested whilst the fourth garden centre, Secretts unfortunately did not monitor sales of the non Home Grown plants so making sales comparison impossible.

Nevertheless the results are encouraging. Two of the three outlets reported sales of Home Grown labelled plants higher than the non-labelled equivalent by 16% and 13% respectively.

The Farm Shop	+ 16%
Newbridge	+ 13%

At the third outlet, Rushfields Garden Centre, sales were slightly higher for the plants without the label. Sales in this garden centre however were very low due to the extremely bad weather. The trail was extended from one week to two weeks but even so just 50 pots in total were sold, 22 pots with the Home Grown label and 28 pots without the symbol.

This result is surprising given the stated preference by consumers for Home Grown labelled plants. The table below shows the responses by gardeners at Rushfields to the question:

Q. If you saw two identical plants at the same price but one had the Home Grown Symbol how likely are you to choose the Home Grown plant?

	No. of Respondents
1. Much More Likely To Buy	11
2. Slightly More Likely To Buy	5
3. Neither More nor Less Likely To Buy	2
4. Slightly Less Likely To Buy	0
5. Much Less Likely To Buy	0

Clearly there was some other factor influencing the purchase decision at Rushfields. The evidence seems to point to:

- 1) a lack of awareness of the availability of the Home Grown alternative and
- 2) the fact that although situated close together the non labelled plants were the first in line in the main flow of consumer traffic. This is supported by the observation of the researcher who in the space of 4 hours observed on two separate occasions customers picking up the non-labelled plant, walking on and on discovering the Home Grown labelled plants picked these up and replaced the non labelled plants.

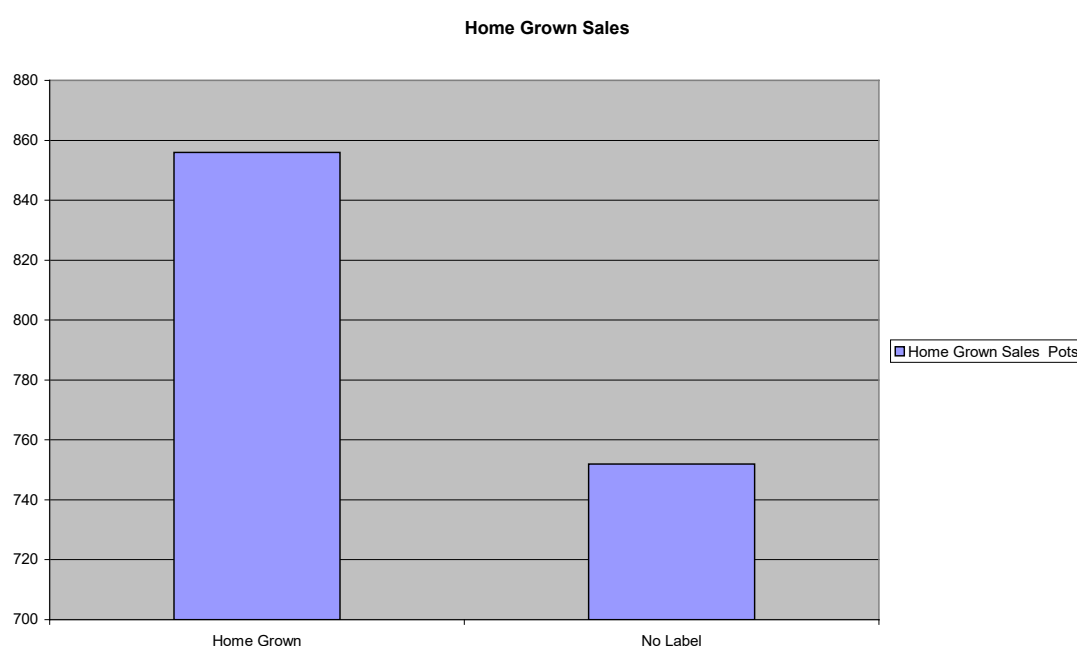
We are therefore of the opinion that the sales levels at the Farm Shop and Newbridge are a more accurate reflection of the results that can be expected.

In all given that the consumer had no awareness of the Home Grown concept prior to visiting the garden centres the results are very encouraging and support the research findings that creating awareness of Home Grown and

the associated benefits will result in gardeners buying more of the plants which bear the symbol.

A campaign to promote the symbol and the benefits associated with “Home Grown” plants with gardeners can only have a positive effect on these results.

Total Sales of Home Grown Labelled Plants versus Non Labelled Plants



The performance of the individual garden centres are as follows:

	Home Grown	Non Home Grown	% difference HG vs non HG
	Pots	Pots	
The Farm Shop	72	62	+ 16%
Newbridge	762	672	+ 13%
Rushfields	22	28	- 22%
TOTAL	856	762	+ 12%

It should be noted that the test period for The Farm Shop was one week and Rushfields and Newbridge was for a two week period.

Press Coverage and Articles

Articles were published specifically about the Home Grown trial in the following magazines:

- July and August editions of Horticultural Week
- The Commercial Greenhouse Grower.
- The Woking Independent (the publication for the Woking Nursery Exhibition)
- An article was also published in *Gardening Which*.

In addition during the course of the project several articles appeared in trade and consumer publications supporting the promotion of British grown plants.

In Horticultural Week, “retail guru” John Stanley was reported as saying there are opportunities for retailers to promote British grown or locally grown plants from a specific region. “I think there’s going to be a backlash down the track against overseas products. We’ve seen it in so many industries.”

In a 3 page article on 31st May in Commercial Grower James Alcaez of the British Bedding Plant Association said “we are keen to promote UK grown plants. My personal view is that a logo is essential. It will give consumers confidence that plants have come from a reputable nursery and that the industry is not harming the environment”. In this context the BBPA is also currently studying the feasibility of an accreditation process, similar to the Red Tractor initiative in the food industry. There is however reservations among some in the industry as to whether growers will sign up for such a scheme with its inherent costs and additional bureaucracy.

In the Telegraph of 14th July 2007 an article was published pointing out the decline in the British cut flower market and suggested that there should be a buy “locally grown” campaign similar to that undertaken by the food industry.

All this is evidence of a ground swell of opinion in the industry of the need to promote British/locally grown plants and that this is now an ideal opportunity to unite key opinion formers behind one scheme.

Conclusions

1. The research findings demonstrate that gardeners reacted very positively to the concept of “Home Grown” plants.
2. Many are seeking information and efforts to inform gardeners of the benefits of home grown plants will be well received and enable them to make an informed choice.
3. A very high proportion, 91% of those interviewed, stated that they would prefer to buy the Home Grown labelled plants.
4. The marketing messages were understood and relevant and marketing material effectively communicated the benefits of buying locally produce plants.
5. The Home Grown symbol was liked and was clear and stood out well.
6. A very small number of consumers thought Home Grown meant grown on the premises but the use of a geographical descriptor e.g. Sussex will overcome this.
7. The retailers and growers who took part in the test remained enthusiastic and wished to continue to supply Home Grown labelled plants.
8. Although the publicity for the trial was limited several growers and retailers have contacted HDC and Impetus Marketing with a view to using the symbol.

Discussion

The research has clearly demonstrated that Home Grown is a concept that will benefit British growers and retailers. To maximise the potential it is important that there is universal adoption of one symbol by the industry and a concerted marketing campaign to communicate the symbol and the marketing messages to gardeners.

The crucial question is how this can be best achieved. To assist this discussion 3 alternative strategies have been identified.

Alternative Strategic Approaches

1. A Regional Approach.

This strategy will facilitate a roll out programme around the country enabling a controlled launch. It should facilitate financial support from the Regional Development Authorities as it will support their individual regional objectives on business activity and employment. If adopted it is proposed that SEEDA are one of the first to be approached as they have already shown an interest and commitment by funding the TNS Research. Other R.D.A.'s could be sounded out at the same time on their interest in supporting such an initiative.

2. Consortium

A consortium of the interested parties would be created, for example, N.F.U, H.D.C, R.H.S, H.T.A. Their role would be to act as a policy group, approving the strategy. An external company could be employed to provide project management and implementation support.

3. Single Body

A single individual body such as the Horticultural Trade Association would be approached to lead the initiative and to provide secretariat and administration support for the project, and funding. It is likely that they would also wish to be responsible for the strategy and implementation.

Considerations for Implementation

Irrespective of which strategy is adopted there are several activities which could be undertaken immediately to continue the momentum and assist the subsequent “launch”.

1. Activity to Enlist the Support of Growers

Growers should be informed of the results of the test and also made aware of the potential benefits to them. In addition to publishing the results of the project on the H.D.C website to ensure a wide audience is reached the following activity is suggested:

- Presentation via a seminar at the Southern Growers Exhibition on 14 November 2007.
- A professionally produced mailer to growers. In addition to a summary of the results a response mechanism could be included enabling growers to “sign up” to use the Home Grown symbol. It would also include details of how they could obtain artwork to enable use of the Home Grown symbol on their labels.
- An article produced and distributed to the trade press. (Impetus has already had requests for this from 3 trade journals and Gardening Which)

2. Copyright Protection

- The registration of the Home Grown name and trade mark.

It is essential that this is undertaken so that it cannot be copied and used without authorisation.

3. Registration of a Web Site domain name.

4. Production of templates of the symbol with various geographical descriptors e.g. Kent, Home Counties etc. for use on labels

5. Development of the consumer leaflet:

- The research demonstrated the importance of all 3 marketing messages that is environmental, local economy and healthy plants. To strengthen their communication the centre spread of the consumer leaflet should be redesigned to depict these three areas visually.
- To incorporate a web site address

Appendix - Research Results

Q1. Frequency of shopping trips for garden plants

	Number of respondents					%
	Secrettes	Rusfields	Farm Shop	Newbridge	Total	
6 or more times a year	8	11	7	8	34	61%
2-5 times a year	3	5	5	5	18	32%
Less than twice a year	1	2	0	1	4	7%
Total	12	18	12	14	56	

Q2. When choosing a specific plant for your garden what factors do you consider when making your selection?

	Number of respondents				
	Secrettes	Rusfields	Farm Shop	Newbridge	Total
Healthy appearance	6	12	4	7	29
Suitability for my garden	5	5	5	7	22
Free from pests or diseases	4	4	3	0	11
Right for the situation – Soil, Light etc	3	6	4	2	15
Price	4 (33%)	10 (55%)	8 (66%)	7 (50%)	29
Looks Fresh	2	7	4	8	21
Acclimatised to the local conditions	3	6	3	1	13
Place of origin (where grown)	1	3	2	0	6
Growing conditions	1	0	0	0	1
Size	2	5	0	0	7
Grown locally /home grown	0	2	2	2	6
Colour	1	3	4	1	9
Scent /perfume	1	1	0	0	2
Ease of maintenance	1	0	0	0	1

Q3. Did you notice the “Home Grown” Symbol on any of the plants or displays here today?

Response	No. of Respondents
Base:	56
Yes	9
No	47

Show the “Home Grown symbol”

Q4. Do you recognise this symbol?

Response	No. of Respondents
Base:	56
Yes	0
No	56

Q5. Show respondents the Home grown symbol. - What is your first impressions of the design?

Response	No. of respondents
Base:	56
Eye catching design	9
It really stands out	15
Caught my attention	3
Sub Total – impactful	27
Like the simplicity of the design	13
Colours - very patriotic/ British	8
Professional	6
Nice design / design looks great	6
Pretty	5
Like the flower design	4
Initially thought home grown meant grown at the garden centre, then saw the grown in Surrey	2
Home Grown, does this mean locally or at the GC	2
Locally grown	3
Plant grown for homes	1
Grown by local cooperatives	1
Looks hand drawn, as if some one cares about it	1
Striking	1
Positive message	1
Negative Comments	
Not printed on recycled paper	2
Don't like the plant/flower	2
Large company rather than a cooperative	1
Design boring	1
Bit basic	1

6. What benefits would you associated with plants bearing the Home Grown symbol?

Response	No. of respondents
Base:	56
Grown locally	13
Grown in the UK	2
Grown by local cooperatives	2
Grown on the premises	1
Support local business	3
Sub Total –grown locally	21
Better quality plants	17
Healthier	1
Sub Total – better quality	18
Acclimatised to the soil	5
Acclimatised to local conds/climate	5
Sub Total – acclimatised	10
Lower price	8
Save on transport costs	1
Not transported so far	6
Sub Total – reduced transport	7
Environmentally better/friendly	6
Less pests (foreign)	4
Better for the garden	1
Easy to look after	3
Plants will do better	1
Loved	1
More organic	1
Not sure	3
None	1

SHOW A COPY OF THE HOME GROWN LEAFLET
Q7. Have you read any part of this leaflet?

Yes

No

Give respondents time to scan the leaflet

Q8. What would you say are the main messages in this leaflet?

Response	No. of respondents
Base:	56
Home Grown is better environmentally	18
Environmentally friendly	7
Environmental - Sub Total	25
Less traffic/CO2 emissions, better for the environment	34
Reducing the carbon print	3
Less plant miles	2
Pollution - Sub Total	39
Supports the local economy / businesses	33
Better plants /better quality	30
Better pest control	23
Local economy- really?	1
Very important messages , carbon print, loc. economy	1
Plants used to local condns. Soil/weather	3
Healthy plants	3
Better price	3
Never considered where plants came from- v.interesting	2
I Didn't realise so many come from overseas	2
Negative Comments	
Environmental mumbo jumbo	1

Q9. Are these important to you, which ones?

Response	No. of respondents
Base:	56
Yes these are important to me	19
I buy locally produced food, now I will with my plants	2
Very concerned at what we are doing to the planet	1
Very in favour of this, I'll keep an eye out for the sign	1
Yes, now I know about it	1
Great that you are raising awareness	1
V. important like to live in a green life	1
Very important messages, carbon print, loc. Economy	1
Yes all good well done	1
Important messages –sub total	28
HG better environmentally	8
Environmentally friendly	3
Environmental –sub total	11
Supports the economy (local),	19
Less traffic/CO2 emissions, better for the environment	13
Better pest control (less pests)	9
Better plants	3
Plants acclimatised to local conds. Soil/weather	2
Healthy plants	3
Better quality plants	3
Better price	1

Q10. What is your overall impression of the leaflet?

Response	No. of respondents
Base:	56
Delightful/ lovely/nice/great	22
Very good	10
Sub Total	32
Very easy to read/understand	15
Message very obvious	1
Sub Total	16
Eye catching	8
Stands out	3
Striking	2
Sub Total	13
Professional(very)	12
Interesting facts/informative	9
Attractive	1
Nice pictures	5
Nice and simple	3
Lavender –my favourite	1
Would pick it up	1
Well laid out	1
Nice big writing	1
Modern	1
Looks British	1
Like the flower	2
Like the poster too	1
Negative Comments	
OK but too British, like exotic designs	1
Maybe too big for handbag	1
Would like more facts	3

Q11. These are some of the benefits that people have associated with “Home Grown” plants. Which ones if any do you think would influence your choice when it comes to selecting a plant to purchase?

Response	No. of respondents
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Base:	56
Grown locally	40
Lower risk of imported pests and diseases	31
Supports British growers	40
Not transported so far - fresher	30
Helps the local economy	36
Benefits the environment- fewer articulated vehicles, less CO2 emissions	39

Q 12 If you saw two identical plants at the same price but one had the Home Grown Symbol how likely are you to choose the Home Grown plant.

Response	No. of respondents
Base:	56
1. Much More Likely To Buy	37
2. Slightly More Likely To Buy	14
3. Neither More nor Less Likely To Buy	5
4. Slightly Less Likely To Buy	0
5. Much Less Likely To Buy	0

Any other comments?

Response	Number of respondents
Has drawn attention to the benefits (of locally grown), will look out for it now	8

Fantastic/Great idea	7
Will look out for it now (Home Grown)	2
Defiantly support local producers	2
Would buy locally even if slightly more expensive	1
As long as good quality and not lots more expensive	1
I put the non -Home Grown back and bought the Home Grown labelled plant	1
Probably would buy but wouldn't look for it	1
Its OK	1
I like it-I'll go buy one	1
The plants look really healthy and fresh	1
Not of interest	1